



Senate File 2225
Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training – Committee Review
Report to the Governor and Iowa General Assembly
December 15, 2012

The legislative directive of 2012 Senate File 2225 is as follows (*italics added*):

Sec. 7 Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training – Committee Review:

A stakeholder committee shall be convened and staffed by the Department of Public Health to review the training resources for mandatory reporters of child abuse. *The review shall address the current training resources and identify options for increasing the frequency of the training and the availability of profession-specific training and for enhancing the effectiveness and quality of the training. The results of the review, including findings, recommendations, and cost projections, shall be submitted to the governor and general assembly on or before December 15, 2012.*

The Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training Review Committee (Review Committee) met on October 23 and December 4, 2012. Review Committee participants included:

Tina Flaherty, private practice
Representative Joel Fry, Iowa House
Carol Gutchewsky, Iowa Department of Human Services
David Hicks, Youth and Shelter Services
Diana Nicholls-Blomme, Iowa Department of Public Health (Facilitator)
Matt O'Loughlin, Starmont Consolidated School District
Stephen Scott, Prevent Child Abuse Iowa
Kathy Stone, Iowa Department of Public Health (Scribe)
Virginia Traxler, Des Moines Public Schools
Karin Ward, Mercy Child Advocacy Centers
Nancy Wells, Iowa Chapter Child Advocacy Centers

The full Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training Review stakeholder list is attached.

The following resources were handed out or referenced at Review Committee meetings and are available on the Iowa Department of Public Health website at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/SF2225/>:

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training – Committee Review contact list
- Letter from Governor Branstad dated March 30, 2012, approving SF 2225

- Codes on Training Hours
- Required Components for a New Abuse Curricula
- Child Abuse Curricula Used
- Combined Child and Dependent Adult Abuse Curricula Used
- Department of Public Health 93—Abuse Education Review Panel; Curricula Criteria
- Department of Human Services 232.69—Child Abuse Training; Child Abuse: A Guide for Mandatory Reporters
- Department of Human Services 235B.16—Dependent Adult Abuse Training; Dependent Adult Abuse: A Guide for Mandatory Reporters
- Usage of Approved Curricula
- Department of Human Services 232.69.3.b—Child Abuse Training
- Department of Human Services 235B.16.5.b—Dependent Adult Abuse Training
- Department of Human Services 235B.16.5.e—Combined Abuse Training
- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force 2012 Letter to the General Assembly
- Child Abuse Referrals by Source
- Mandatory Reporters by Profession

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training Review Committee Meeting: October 23, 2012

The Review Committee discussed:

- a. Laws and legal definitions on child abuse and mandatory reporting;
- b. Department of Human Services (DHS) responsibilities, processes, staff, and training;
- c. Issues that do not fall under DHS purview, e.g. children perpetrating against children or requests for child well-being checks, and potential roles of law enforcement and county attorneys;
- d. Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) responsibilities related to approval of mandatory reporter training curricula;
- e. Lack of an established funding source for mandatory reporter training curricula responsibilities;
- f. Frequent lack of services and supports in rural areas; and
- g. How these issues and “potential barriers and options” might be built into improved child abuse mandatory reporter training.

Agenda Topic: Increasing the Frequency of Training

Per Iowa Code 232.69.3b:

“A person required to make a report under subsection 1, other than a physician whose professional practice does not regularly involve primary health care to children, shall complete two hours of training relating to the identification and reporting of child abuse within six months of initial employment or self-employment involving the examination, attending, counseling, or treatment of children on a regular basis. Within one month of initial employment or self-employment, the person shall obtain a statement of the abuse reporting requirements from the person’s employer or, if self-employed, from the department. The person shall complete at least two hours of additional child abuse identification and reporting training every five years.”

CURRENT Frequency of Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training		
Requirement	Impacted Employees	Timeframe and Hours
Statement of Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Requirements	All new employees subject to mandatory reporter requirements	Within 1 month of employment
Initial Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training	All new employees subject to mandatory reporter requirements	Within 6 months of employment; 2 hours
Ongoing Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training	All employees subject to mandatory reporter requirements	Within 5 years of Initial Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training; 2 hours

The two hour mandatory child abuse reporter trainings must cover specific required components in a curriculum approved by IDPH. Training for dependent adult abuse mandatory reporters must also cover required components and must also be at least two hours in length. The law allows for a combined two-hour training covering requirements for both child abuse and dependent adult abuse mandatory reporters.

Review Committee members expressed concern about potential quality issues in mandatory child abuse reporter training. It was suggested that some trainings that meet minimum requirements may not be high quality because the trainer lacks in-depth knowledge about the subject matter and may be unable to respond adequately to attendee questions, concerns, and real-life situations. IDPH approval of training curricula is based on review of the content of each curriculum only and does not consider the qualifications of the trainer. On-line trainings are common and can be time-effective for practitioners and employers, but may not be structured to support discussion, response to questions, or problem-solving, which are seen as vital to fully understanding and meeting mandatory child abuse reporter requirements.

Consensus: *Mandatory child abuse reporter training methods should meet the intent of the law, be effective, support engagement of participants, and be faithful to approved curricula content, whether provided face-to-face or on-line and whether conducted in-house or through general external training.*

Review Committee discussion on **increasing the frequency of training** addressed:

- a. Inclusion of basic problem-solving in mandatory child abuse reporter trainings, e.g. how to advise parents/caregivers or reporters of alternatives when a situation reported does not meet the definition of abuse;
- b. Requirements for orienting new employees to mandatory child abuse reporter policies within the first 30 days of employment, initial mandatory child abuse reporter training by a provider with an IDPH approval number within six months of employment, and ongoing mandatory child abuse reporter training every five years;
- c. Establishing tiers or levels of mandatory child abuse reporter training depending on a person's practice or work setting, frequency of reporting, etc.;

- d. Potential benefits of “booster” mandatory child abuse reporter training following a new employee’s initial training, with content that would make the booster training more specific to participants’ work settings and responsibilities;
- e. Complex scenarios such as:
 - Infrequent reporters who miss a case of child abuse and/or don’t make a report;
 - Poorly trained individuals who make frequent reports of child abuse which do not fall within Iowa’s definition of child abuse;
 - Individuals who try to make required child abuse reports but who are “overruled” by “interveners” like a supervisor or hospital administrator or school principal. (The legislature has attempted to address similar concerns by saying employers can’t have policies that deter or limit reporting.);
 - A nurse making a report because the doctor who should make the report has directed the nurse to do it instead; and
 - Reporter reluctance to report “good families”;
- f. The 300,000 mandatory child abuse reporters in Iowa represent many different categories of workers, including but not limited to, coaches, dieticians, maintenance staff, physicians, nurses, teachers, and therapists, with a wide range of responsibilities;
- g. The current 5-year mandatory child abuse reporter training requirement may not be a good fit with certain professions’ mandatory reporting requirements or credentialing/re-credentialing timeframes and mandatory child abuse reporter training hours may not count toward some professions’ continuing education hours;
- h. Possible drawbacks to the two-hour combined training on mandatory child abuse and dependent adult abuse reporter requirements;
- i. Tracking mandatory child abuse reporter training hours is necessary for certain employers and an employer can take disciplinary action if an employee doesn’t meet requirements; and
- j. Issues related to changing employers and/or professions.

Consensus: Each individual mandatory child abuse reporter is responsible to ensure her/his training requirements are met. Employers are responsible for documenting that their training policies are met and should request documentation of training from new employees.

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training Review Committee Meeting: December 4, 2012

The Review Committee discussed:

- a. Child abuse referrals to DHS by reporter type: Anonymous/Unknown, Known-Permissive, and the various mandatory child abuse reporter categories;
- b. Mandatory child abuse reporters by profession; and
- c. More than 50 percent of referrals to DHS are made by mandatory child abuse reporters, distributed across the six professional categories of mandatory reporters listed below as well as a “Miscellaneous” category:
 - Child Care
 - Education
 - Health
 - Law Enforcement
 - Mental Health
 - Social Worker

Agenda Topic: Increasing the Frequency of Training

Consensus: *Increase the frequency of mandatory child abuse reporter training by adding a 90-minute “booster” training within 24-36 months of new employment.*
(See Recommendation #1 below for details.)

Agenda Topic: Increasing the Availability of Profession-Specific Training

Discussion by the Review Committee on **increasing the availability of profession-specific training** addressed:

- a. Disciplines, professions, and types of workers who are mandatory child abuse reporters;
- b. Benefits and limitations of multiple disciplines/professions/types of workers attending the same trainings;
- c. Potential benefits of profession-specific trainings;
- d. Potential role of professional associations in designing, developing, and providing profession-specific mandatory child abuse reporter trainings;
- e. Benefits of profession-specific information and professional expertise in booster mandatory child abuse reporter trainings; and
- f. Curricula and trainer issues and approval processes related to profession-specific training.

Consensus: *Support, but do not require, profession-specific mandatory child abuse reporter training.*
(See Recommendation #2 below for details.)

Agenda Topic: Enhancing the Effectiveness and Quality of Training

Review Committee discussion on **enhancing the effectiveness and quality of training** addressed:

- a. IDPH curricula approval process for mandatory child abuse reporter training, including the historical role of the Abuse Education Review Panel;
- b. Absence of requirements or standards regarding trainer qualifications to provide mandatory child abuse reporter trainings;
- c. Options for monitoring trainer effectiveness and trainer fidelity to the IDPH-approved mandatory child abuse reporter training curriculum being presented;
- d. Department on Aging certification of training and trainers related to dependent adult abuse/elder abuse, including current and proposed requirements for a standardized curriculum, certified trainers, and face-to-face training (as considered in response to the legislative directive in 2012 House File 2387); and
- e. Potential benefits of standardized curricula for mandatory child abuse reporter training and requirements for trainer qualifications.

Consensus: *All mandatory child abuse reporter trainings should be of high quality. Quality can be improved by standardizing the training curricula and establishing qualifications for trainers.*
(See Recommendation #3 below for details.)

Senate File 2225
Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training – Committee Review
RECOMMENDATIONS
December 15, 2012

#1. Recommendation: Increase the frequency of mandatory child abuse reporter training by adding a Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Booster Training to the training requirements

A. Add a 90-minute mandatory child abuse reporter booster training within 24-36 months of employment

RECOMMENDED Frequency of Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training			
Requirement	Current or Recommended	Impacted Employees	Timeframe and Hours
Statement of Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Requirements	Current	All new employees subject to mandatory reporter requirements	Within 1 month of employment
Initial Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training	Current	All new employees subject to mandatory reporter requirements	Within 6 months of employment; 2 hours
Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Booster Training	Recommended	All new employees subject to mandatory reporter requirements	Within 24-36 months of employment; 90 minutes
Ongoing Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training	Current	All employees subject to mandatory reporter requirements	Within 5 years of Initial Mandatory Reporter Training; 2 hours

Specifically, a person required to make a report shall complete the mandatory child abuse reporter booster training (booster training) within 24-36 months of initial employment or self-employment involving the examination, attending, counseling, or treatment of children on a regular basis except as follows:

- a. If person required to make a report obtains subsequent employment prior to completing the booster training, and the person’s subsequent employment is substantially similar or the person has the same job responsibilities and the employer requires the person to complete two hours of training within six months of the subsequent employment, the person shall complete the booster training between 24-36 months of subsequent employment. However, if the person did not complete two hours of training within six months of employment at the subsequent employer, the person shall complete the booster training between 24-36 months of initial employment at the previous employer; and

- b. If the person required to make a report obtains subsequent employment prior to completing the booster training, and the person's subsequent employment is not substantially similar, the person must complete the booster training between 24-36 months of employment at the subsequent employer.

B. The curriculum for the mandatory child abuse reporter booster training should differ from other mandatory child abuse reporter training by emphasizing certain required curricula components and participant engagement

- 1) Booster training should be conducted in a manner that allows interaction between the trainer and the participants and that emphasizes problem-solving.
- 2) Booster training should focus on Required Components for a New Abuse Curriculum 2, 3, 6, and 7, excerpted below:
 - 2. A description of the physical, psychological, behavioral, environmental, and other relevant indicators of child abuse;
 - 3. A review of the requirements and procedures for reporting suspected cases of abuse, including when to report, how to report, and to whom to report. The review should address attendee questions, concerns, and experiences to-date;
 - 6. An evaluation component to assess the understanding, knowledge, and skills acquired by the participants; and
 - 7. Resource materials or information in each of the following areas:
 - (a.) The causes and risk factors of child abuse
 - (b.) Assisting individuals and families who have experienced child abuse, including information on local resources and available referral services; and
 - (c.) Prevention of child abuse.
- 3) Booster training should include a standardized hand-out, preferably wallet card size, succinctly articulating Required Components for a New Abuse Curriculum 1, 3, and 4, excerpted below:
 - 1. The meaning of child abuse as defined in Iowa Code section 232.68(2);
 - 3. The requirements and procedures for reporting suspected cases of abuse, including when to report, how to report, and to whom to report; and
 - 4. The Code of Iowa and the Iowa Administrative Code pertaining to child abuse, including a review of the classifications of mandatory reporters, confidentiality provisions, immunity provisions, and penalties for failure to report.

The standardized hand-out shall be discussed during the mandatory child abuse reporter booster training only as needed to highlight changes in law.

C. Mandatory child abuse reporter booster training should be accepted as professional continuing education hours, but should not lead to an expansion in the number of hours of continuing education required

The SF 2225 Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training Review Committee acknowledges that certifying, licensing, and credentialing entities hold final authority for their specific continuing education requirements.

#2. Recommendation: Increase the availability of profession-specific mandatory child abuse reporter training through support rather than mandate

A. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) should modify mandatory child abuse reporter training curricula approval/re-approval documents to allow applicants to indicate the profession(s) to which the training will be targeted

The profession-specific indicators should include those listed below, as well as a “General” indicator:

- Child Care
- Education
- Health
- Law Enforcement
- Mental Health
- Social Worker

Only those IDPH-approved mandatory child abuse reporter training curricula designated as targeted to a given profession may be used for profession-specific training.

IDPH should be further directed to convene a mandatory child abuse reporter training work group that includes the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Public Safety to consider options for supporting profession-specific mandatory child abuse reporter training. The work group shall also make recommendations regarding indicated changes in related Iowa Code and/or Iowa Administrative Rules.

#3. Recommendation: Enhance the effectiveness and quality of mandatory child abuse reporter training by standardizing the curricula, establishing requirements for certain trainers, and increasing the number of hours required for combined mandatory child abuse and dependent adult abuse reporter training

A. Standardize the curricula for mandatory child abuse reporter trainings

The recommended IDPH mandatory child abuse reporter training work group that includes the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Public Safety shall establish standardized curricula for mandatory child abuse reporter trainings, consistent with the *Consensus* statements in the full SF 2225 report and with the language in Recommendation #1 above, and based on the resources listed below:

- Department of Human Services Child Abuse: A Guide for Mandatory Reporters
- Required Components for a New Abuse Curriculum.

The recommended IDPH mandatory child abuse reporter training work group that includes the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Public Safety shall also make recommendations regarding indicated changes in related Iowa Code and/or Iowa Administrative Rules and project costs associated with standardizing mandatory child abuse reporter training curricula.

B. Require specific qualifications for trainers who provide mandatory child abuse reporter booster training

To qualify as a trainer for mandatory child abuse reporter booster training, an individual must meet all of the following requirements:

- 1) An Iowa-licensed, certified or otherwise credentialed professional in at least one of the following fields:
 - Child Care
 - Education
 - Health
 - Law Enforcement
 - Mental Health
 - Social Worker;
- 2) Documented expertise in child abuse, child neglect, and childhood trauma; and
- 3) Documented Iowa employment in the immediate preceding five calendar years involving the examination, attending, counseling, or treatment of children on a regular basis in accordance with Iowa Code 232.69b.

The recommended IDPH mandatory child abuse reporter training work group that includes the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Public Safety shall establish qualifications for trainers who provide mandatory child abuse reporter booster training and suggest methodologies for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of such trainers. The work group shall also make recommendations regarding indicated changes in related Iowa Code and/or Iowa Administrative Rules and project costs associated with establishing trainer qualifications and implementing methodologies for monitoring and evaluating trainers.

C. Increase the required number of hours for combined mandatory child abuse and dependent adult abuse training from the current two hours to three hours

The recommended IDPH mandatory child abuse reporter training work group that includes the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Public Safety shall consult with the Department on Aging to establish curricula for combined training and assure alignment with 2012 House File 2387.

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